



FIFTY-SEVENTH
ANNUAL REPORT
..OF THE..
MINISTRY-
AT-LARGE

IN LOWELL, MASS.



——— For the Year from ———
May, 1901, to April, 1902, Inclusive



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LOWELL, MASS.
COURIER-CITIZEN COMPANY, PRINTERS,
1902.

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TO THE CITIZENS OF LOWELL:—

Fifty-seven years ago, this Ministry-at-Large was organized by a group of philanthropic men. They were inspired by the philanthropic spirit of their day which then took possession of the Unitarian churches of New England through the inspiring appeal and leadership of Rev. Joseph Tuckerman of Boston.

The high purpose of the organizers was to safeguard the family life of the small wage earners of this city by timely aid and friendly counsel; to do a charitable, educational and religious work with the hand workers of this manufacturing community.

This work, during all these years, has been under the scrutiny of directors who were invariably men and women of standing in the community; and the work steadily done by the three Ministers-at-Large: Rev. Horatio Wood, for twenty-four years; Rev. Hiram Clarke Duganne, for fifteen years, and by the present incumbent, for sixteen years, and assisted by innumerable volunteer workers and friendly visitors.

No test of creed or race was applied, only the succoring of the needy and building up of them in social sense and moral intention. The ends sought were better homes and better citizens.

Financial support came at first from the churches, then from the mills, then from generous friends. When the churches and the mills could no longer aid the Ministry-at-Large, these generous friends became its supporters. In this connection we remember Dr. J. C. Dalton, Dr. Holbrook, Miss Penhallow, Harriet A. Wilder, Zena A. Stone, Jonathan Tyler, Thomas Nesmith, Mrs. Rugg, Mrs. Hazeltine, N. U. Wright, Mrs. John Nesmith and others.

The rule of our charity is based on respect for the personality of those we assist, avoidance of spectacular display in

assisting the needy, assisting the self-respecting who are for the time being too weak to hold their own, and to the end of putting them on their self-supporting feet again.

Under this rule we assisted during the past year 596 applicants for our aid. Food was given to the hungry, clothing to the naked, shelter to the homeless, care to the sick, money to the penniless, work to the workless, legal protection to the oppressed, and the friendly counsel which senses the hardships of unfortunates and goes deep enough into their lives for that pity which begets at times profound reverence for the fine character of those we are aiding.

Our office is at 150 Middlesex Street, between Elliot and South Streets, and is open mornings of the week to receive applications from destitute or distressed persons, and to give advice and aid.

The endorsement of a family by its minister or priest, or by some reputable citizen, is guarantee to us till our own investigation is made. Pending this investigation temporary aid is given. As it is our purpose to aid industrious and orderly families, others are referred to the city or state institutions.

The mill corporations used to contribute to our work, because so many of their operatives receive our aid. But these contributions have not as yet been renewed.

The monies which enables us to do our relief work comes from the legacies of Thomas Nesmith and Jonathan Tyler.

Under the will of Thomas Nesmith the interest money on his legacy of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars, for the poor of Lowell who are not paupers, is paid through the City Treasurer to a Board of Trustees. This Board of Trustees distributes this money through the Ministry-at-large as Mr. Nesmith willed. The Ministry-at-Large makes no charge for distributing this interest money. Report of it is made annually to this Board of Trustees and monthly to the Board of Managers of the Ministry-at-Large.

Under the will of Jonathan Tyler the interest money on his legacy of Ten Thousand Dollars, for the poor of Lowell who are not paupers, and whose names are not to be made known, is paid through the City Treasurer to the Minister-at-Large for distribution, as Mr. Tyler willed. There is no charge made for distributing this interest money. Report of it is made annually to the City Auditor and the Mayor, and monthly to the Board of Managers of the Ministry-at-Large.

In this connection is this recently discovered memorandum of Rev. Horatio Wood:

MAY 10, 1866.

Last evening I called on Mr. Thomas Nesmith. He introduced the subject of his bequeathment, the writings of which were on the point of being drawn, of twenty-five thousand dollars for the benefit of the poor of Lowell. He said to me that it was intended for the class of poor above that of paupers, to keep them from the almshouse, and afford relief to necessary want. He said that the income of the above-named sum was to be passed to me, as Minister-at-Large connected with the Free Chapel, and to my successors in office forever, to be expended according to the above-mentioned intent as we should deem most advantageous to the poor.

Having set before me his intent and idea, he requested me to suggest and state in writing, and prepare for incorporation into the will, any safeguard or direction that my experience and thought would indicate as important to make this gift a sure and perpetual blessing.

HORATIO WOOD.

We spent this past year from the Thomas Nesmith Fund \$1,500, from the Jonathan Tyler Fund \$600, from the Dr. J. C. Dalton Fund \$70.00, from Mrs. John Nesmith's Maternity Fund \$25. In addition to this we have distributed contributions of clothing from several Lowell families.

Free electric car excursions were given five hundred women and children through the generosity of the Lowell & Suburban

Railroad Co. The Country Week Committee has been allowed the use of our offices for its work.

Classes are held for the instructing of women and girls in cookery, dressmaking, millinery, hygiene, mother's duties and amusement. Classes are held for men and boys in gymnastics, hygiene, debating and amusement. There is instruction also in readings, history, geography, politics, social problems. Socials and entertainments are given by members of these classes.

Our cooking school, which we carried on for fourteen years, with large attendance and results, has been used by the School Board, through its superintendent A. K. Whitcomb, as part of the city's summer vacation schools—he, and the teacher of cookery, Miss Grace Batchelder, of the Prince School, Boston, finding that it was fully equipped and adapted to the city's needs.

The Mayor of Lowell appointed me State visitor and advisor of the paroled men from the State Farm at Bridgewater, mostly intemperates. The opportunity to influence some of these men, who have families, is immeasurable, to make better living conditions for the wife and children connected with some of these men.

The Women's Auxiliary of the Massachusetts Civil Service Reform Association, requested that I should organize a Lowell Branch of that organization. The Branch was organized at a meeting held at the home of Mrs. Frederic T. Greenhalge, and at which I presided. The speakers were Prof. Wm. T. Sedgwick of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mr. Chas. M. Porter, Civil Service Commissioner of Massachusetts, and Mrs. Mary Morton Kehew, of the Executive Committee of the Women's Auxiliary of the Massachusetts Civil Service Reform Association. Mrs. Frederic T. Greenhalge was elected President of the Lowell Branch, and Mrs. George C. Wright the Secretary and Treasurer.

Our Church is free to all. No creedal test. No pew rent. No enrolled membership. Good church music and congrega-

tional singing. The first part of the church service is musical and responsive. The rest of it is of the usual congregational order. Sermons that are clear statements of the Christian principles and experiences, and that give courage and leading and life to men needing it. The minister here must have a gospel to preach.

In our Church congregations are families who attend the services regularly and steadfastly and reverently support the Church activities. There are others, of course, as in all congregations, who come for a time and whose self-appreciation takes the form of their expectancy of material benefits in return for their attendance and nominal interest. One such attendant for a time expected a hundred dollars to get out a patent, another one expected a set of parlor furniture; another, money enough to put in the foundation of his little cottage. The expectation of material benefits to accrue takes on various forms, here, as it does in other churches. But such adherents leave us finally discouraged, as all we have to offer directly through our Church services is the religious incentive for men "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk reverently with God."

Our Church has united during the past three winters in the union services held in the different liberal Christian churches of the city, including the First Unitarian, First Universalist, Grace Universalist and this Free Church.

I have been the Secretary during this time of the Liberal Christian Club, which is made up of the men of these churches. I am also the Secretary and Treasurer of the Merrimack Valley Unitarian Church League, and also the Secretary of the North Middlesex Conference.

Our Sunday School is free and orderly. Its discipline is firm but unobtrusive. There is a large enrolment of scholars,

who attend with marked regularity. There were Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter festivals for the children.

The year has been a prosperous one industrially. The great mills here have been running full time, and workmen have readily found employment. But in a community made up largely, as is Lowell, of hand workers, depending on their weekly wages for the support of their families, there is every year a number of heads of families who become incapacitated, for a time, because of accidents, sickness, breakdown, loss of employment, or death of the bread winner. These come to us for succor and support in their extremity and till they can get themselves on their own self-supporting feet again. Herein is our privilege and work; and I assure you that human nature acts nobly under such stress, and herein is our inspiration and encouragement to go on untiringly in our work. Such work as we are doing here, without spectacular display, is really worth doing for the families we help and for the community of which we are a part.

GEORGE C. WRIGHT,

Minister-at-Large.

LOWELL, April 30, 1902.



FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give, devise and bequeath unto the MINISTRY-AT-LARGE
in Lowell, Massachusetts, the sum of.....Dollars.

NOTE.—The list of Contributors to the Ministry-at-Large will be sent only to Contributors. It has been found that such lists published by charitable institutions may be the means of annoyance to those contributing.